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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/784,573

02/23/2004

Ferass Abuzaina

ETH-5124

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09/08/2006

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EXAMINER

PUNNOOSE, ROY M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2877

DATE MAILED: 09/08/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/784,573

Applicant(s)

ABUZAINA ET AL.

Examiner

Roy M. Punnoose

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 July 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 14 and 15 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 February 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>6/23/2004</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of claims 1-15 in the reply filed on July 17, 2006 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 14 and 15 recites wave numbers in the range between about 4,000 to about 10,000 cm^{-1} .
4. A broad range or limitation together with a narrow range or limitation that falls within the broad range or limitation (in the same claim) is considered indefinite, since the resulting claim does not clearly set forth the metes and bounds of the patent protection desired. See MPEP § 2173.05(c). Note the explanation given by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in *Ex parte Wu*, 10 USPQ2d 2031, 2033 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1989), as to where broad language is followed by "such as" and then narrow language. The Board stated that this can render a claim indefinite by raising a question or doubt as to whether the feature introduced by such language is (a) merely exemplary of the remainder of the claim, and therefore not required, or (b) a required feature of the claims. Note also, for example, the decisions of *Ex parte Steigewald*, 131 USPQ 74 (Bd. App. 1961); *Ex parte Hall*, 83 USPQ 38 (Bd. App. 1948); and *Ex parte Hasche*, 86 USPQ 481 (Bd. App. 1949). In the present instance, claim 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 14 and 15 recite the

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broad recitation of $3900\text{-}10100\text{ cm}^{-1}$, and the claim also recites $4100\text{-}9900\text{ cm}^{-1}$, which is the narrower statement of the range/limitation.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

5. The 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

6. Claims 1 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

7. Claim 1 is rejected because it is claiming a non-tangible result. In claim 1, merely calculating the optical retardation value of the material using the spectra would not appear to be sufficient to constitute a useful, concrete and tangible result, since the outcome of the calculating step has not been used in a disclosed practical application nor made available (in the claim) in such a manner that its usefulness in a disclosed practical application can be realized. See OG Notices: 22 November 2005, "Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility".

8. Claims 2 and 3 are rejected because it is claiming a non-tangible result. In claims 2 and 3, merely determining the birefringence value of the material according to the formula would not appear to be sufficient to constitute a useful, concrete and tangible result, since the outcome of the determining step has not been used in a disclosed practical application nor made available (in the claim) in such a manner that its usefulness in a disclosed practical application can be realized. See OG Notices: 22 November 2005, "Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility".

The applicant is requested to determine whether the claimed invention complies with the subject matter eligibility requirement of 35 U.S.C. Sec. 101, sentence 3, in the OG Notice from 22 November 2005, which states “In determining whether the claim is for a practical application, the focus is not on whether the steps taken to achieve a particular result are useful, tangible, and concrete, but rather that the final result achieved by the claimed invention is “useful, tangible, and concrete.”

9. Claims 4-13 are rejected for reasons similar to the reasons of rejection of claim 1, 2 and 3 above because they are not claiming a useful, concrete and tangible result and therefore are directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 4-13 comprise(s) intermediate step(s) in the method for determining the optical retardation value of an anisotropic material, claimed in claims 1, 2 and/or 3.

Allowable Subject Matter

10. Claims 1, 2 and 3 would be allowable if amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 101 rejections above.

11. Claims 4-13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, or if the base claim is amended to overcome the rejection.

12. Claims 1, 2 and 3 would be allowable because the prior art of record, taken alone or in combination, fails to disclose or render obvious a method for determining the optical retardation value of an anisotropic material comprising, collecting an absorbance or transmission spectra as a function of wavenumbers in at least a portion of the range between 4,000 to 10,000 cm^{-1} , in combination with the rest of the limitations of the respective claims.

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13. Claims 14 and 15 would be allowable because the prior art of record, taken alone or in combination, fails to disclose or render obvious a Fourier transform near infrared based system comprising a Fourier transform near infrared spectrophotometer having source means for generating a light beam having at least a spectral range between 4,000 to 10,000 cm^{-1} , in combination with the rest of the limitations of the respective claims.

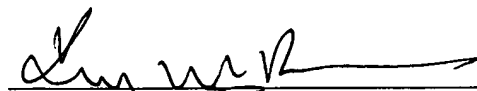
Contact/Status Information

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Roy M. Punnoose** whose telephone number is **571-272-2427**. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Gregory J. Toatley, Jr.** can be reached on **571-272-2800 ext.77**. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is **571-273-8300**.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

September 05, 2006


Roy M. Punnoose
Patent Examiner
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